



PURSUED BY MOORISH ROBBERS Page 52

PEEPS AT GREAT EXPLORERS

# MUNGO PARK

BY

SIR GEORGE SCOTT, K.C.I.E.

AUTHOR OF

"ALEXANDER THE GREAT," "MARCO POLO," AND  
"VASCO DA GAMA" IN THE SAME SERIES

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## NOTE

*Never was there a time when the exploration of the earth's surface appealed more strongly to the hearts and minds of men than it does now. The development of the aeroplane, with all its possibilities of penetration into regions inaccessible before, has created enthusiasm only comparable with the enthusiasm which burst forth in the Elizabethan age and sent men sailing into the unknown.*

*It is futile to say that the main outlines of all the countries of the world have been charted; there are still regions awaiting the magic touch of the discoverer, some holding remains of ancient civilizations which yield nothing in interest to those heretofore laid bare.*

*It must be remembered that it is only in our day man has reached the North and South Poles, and that first flights have been made over deserts hitherto untraversed and mountain ranges which have held their sombre secrets since the world began.*

*Could the mingled romance and heroism of travel ever soar higher than in the story of Scott's march to the South Pole, and his tragic return journey? In the story of every true explorer there is much to enlighten the mind and touch the heart in varying degree. In this series it is hoped to capture something of this enlightenment and pathos in the life-stories of those men who, imbued with the passion of discovery, have risked everything to fill in the map of the world.*

*The stories must be confined to those who are no longer among us, but will be brought up to the very date of yesterday in the case of Doughty, Scott, Peary, and many another. To tell such wondrous tales as they should be told, we must write of the men who first reached India and laid open the interior of the continent of Asia and the great Empire of China to wondering Western eyes; of those who revealed the linked mass of the Americas, where only a vast ocean scattered with islands had been supposed to exist; of the sailors who visited the four quarters of the globe, including the Polar regions; and of those who penetrated into the unknown interior of Africa.*

*In earlier days even the larger outlines were missing from our maps; to-day it is the more detailed work that is carried on, yet both appeal to everyone who has a spirit beyond the armchair and imagination to carry him on wings to the uttermost parts of the earth.*

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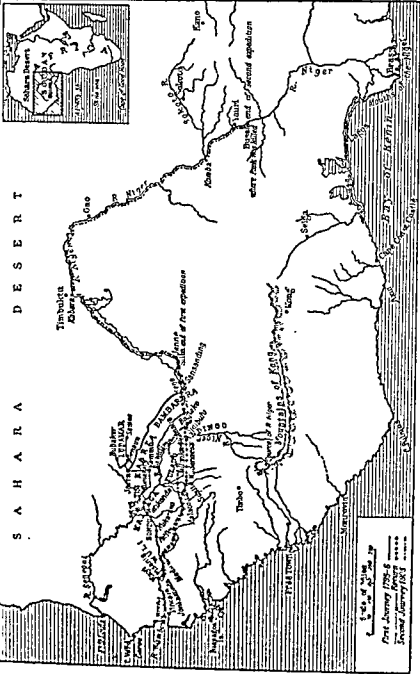
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# S A H A R A D E S E R T



SKETCH-MAP OF PARK'S TRAVELS IN AFRICA

# MUNGO PARK

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY YEARS

MUNGO PARK was born on the 10th September, 1771, at Foulshiels, a Selkirkshire farm in the Ettrick Forest, *on the banks of the Yarrow*. His father, also called Mungo, rented the farm from the Duke of Buccleugh and held it till he died, at the age of seventy-seven, in 1792.

He had a family of thirteen, eight of whom grew up to be men and women, and young Mungo was, like Sir Walter Scott, also born in 1771, the seventh child. He was the third son, and his mother was a daughter of John Hislop, also a farmer, of Tennis, a few miles up the river from Foulshiels.

Mungo the father must have been a successful farmer, for he was able to engage a resident private tutor to attend to the early education of his children, all of whom did well in after life.

Foulshiels stood on the high road and was little more than a cottage. The walls still remain, and a tablet records the birth there of the discoverer of the course of the Niger. It was solidly built of whinstone, but had no more than three rooms. To make up for this it stood on the most picturesque part of the Yarrow, cele-



## Mungo Park

brated by Wordsworth and a favourite with the old minstrels of the Border. At the top of the valley slope stood "Newark's stately towers," of which one, at any rate, is still in reasonable preservation.

The Yarrow comes gurgling down over rocks and rapids from mountain and moorland loch, where the winter gales let nothing grow higher than heather and bent grass, but below, the glen widens out through birchen bowers to join the Ettrick near Selkirk.

As soon as little Mungo was old enough he was sent to Selkirk Grammar School, and no doubt walked the four and a half miles there and back again every day. We know as little about the dominie as about Mungo the father. He does not seem to have taken any pride in his old pupil, and had nothing to say about him in after days except that he was silent and studious and always at the head of his class, and fond of reading the old Border ballads and legends.

It was a famous neighbourhood. A matter of fifty years before, James Thomson, the poet of *The Seasons*, had gone south from Ednam near Kelso. John Leyden, the poet and Orientalist and the friend of Sir Walter Scott, was born four years after Mungo at Denholm in Roxburghshire, and Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, at Ettrickhall, one year before him, and there were many others of more local fame.

Mungo's father was in his teens when Selkirk, we are told, made two thousand pairs of shoes for Charles Edward, the Young Pretender, in 1745; and the son, with his love for the old Border ballads and the tales told in the long winter nights, no doubt was proud of the town, with its song at the annual "Common Riding" and the chorus of:

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president of the Royal Society in 1778, and remained president for forty-one years.

He became interested in young Dickson, who, after experience as head gardener on various estates, started as a seedsman in London, and so was able to make use of the very large library of books on botany and other natural history subjects which Sir Joseph had gathered together.

Dickson took his young nephew on a vacation botanizing tour in the Highlands, and afterwards introduced him to Sir Joseph Banks, who thought so much of his capacity and enthusiasm that he became Mungo's friend and patron.

Sir Joseph was one of the promoters or chief directors of the African Association, founded to carry out exploration in the interior of Africa, and more especially interested in the course of the enigmatic river Niger and the mysterious city and great caravan centre of Timbuktu, known to be visited by parties of traders from Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, Tripoli and Egypt.

The Association had sent out several explorers, but in nearly every case their journeys had ended disastrously, either in death from disease or clashings with the natives.

Park's aim and ambition were therefore early attracted to Africa, but it was not to Africa that he first went from the banks of the Yarrow. Sir Joseph Banks's interest or recommendation got him the post of assistant surgeon on the *Worcester*, East Indiaman, and he sailed in February, 1792, for Bencoolen, in Sumatra. Bencoolen was then a British possession, and had been so since 1685. It was handed over to the Dutch in 1825 in exchange for their settlements in the Malay Peninsula.

## Early Years

Park does not seem to have kept a journal. At any rate there is no record of it, but he sent home descriptions of eight new fishes to the Linnæan Society, in whose Proceedings they were published, along with discussions on the botany of the island, but there is nothing to show that he went far from the coast.

He kept up a friendly correspondence with Banks, and was cordially welcomed by him when the year's voyage was over. Just at this time the African Association's latest explorer, Major Houghton, had been murdered by the Moors, on his way to Timbuktu. The disaster had in no way discouraged Banks, and it came to Park's ears that the Association wanted someone to take Houghton's place.

Park promptly offered himself, and was unhesitatingly accepted. He had no knowledge of Africa or of accurate geographical work, but he had shown himself to be an acute observer, an untiring student of natural history, and was full of zeal and enthusiasm, and he was only twenty-four years old. The Association had been formed in 1788 by a number of influential men, with Sir Joseph Banks as their President. It was not at all a commercial body, and, in fact, after receiving a charter, was finally incorporated in the Royal Geographical Society.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MYSTERY OF THE NIGER

THE ancients knew more of Africa and even of the Niger than the European peoples of the Middle Ages. Explorers, or rather traders, from Phœnicia, Greece,

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Carthage and Rome, followed one another in pushing up from the Mediterranean coast and trying to penetrate beyond the Great Desert into Central Africa.

Herodotus, who is labelled the Father of History and who wrote about two thousand three hundred years ago, collected information which convinced him that there was a river in Africa, south of the Great Desert, which cut the continent in two, just as, he says, the Danube does Europe, and, after the fashion of his time, his account is full of strange tales and mythological fantasies.

Strabo and Pliny, who wrote about the beginning of our era, and Ptolemy, the Alexandrine astronomer and geographer, about a century and a half after them, drew up descriptions and maps which were the accepted authority for four or five hundred years.

They divided North and Central Africa into three zones south from the Mediterranean. The first, along the coastlands, dwindled, through a land sprinkled with fertile oases, into a ghastly desert, and beyond this was the land of the negroes, intersected by rivers, with abundant springs and luxuriant vegetation.

Herodotus knew the Niger, but was persuaded that it was a branch of the Nile and flowed from the west to the east. Ptolemy had the same idea, but Pliny, though he brought the Nile from the west, was convinced that the Niger was not the same river. These remained the authorities for Europe during a period of a matter of a thousand years.

It was Henry the Navigator who revealed Africa to Europe. The Portuguese Prince was a scholar, besides being a soldier, a sailor, and above all a fanatical hater of the Moslems, whom he called Moors, no matter where they were found. He adopted Herodotus' view, and had a project of sailing up from the Atlantic to the Prester



## The Mystery of the Niger.

John country, descending the Nile and falling upon the Soldan, and so making an end of all the followers of the Prophet.

He looked upon all Moslems as a menace to the True Faith, and all the Kafirs, *the negroes of whatever caste*, as brute beasts and to be treated as cattle. They were in the human image certainly, and if they were baptized, forcibly or otherwise, there was a chance that they might be saved from eternal damnation. Therefore he and his associates taught the European nations to make slaves of them after the age-old Eastern practice. The *discovery of the new world in the West, and the need of labour there*, made it very easy to dispose of these brands saved from the burning, and in a very few years the supply of negroes for the plantations proved to be far more profitable than shipments of gold and palm oil, and brought shippers almost in fleets.

The Portuguese, like the Phœnicians, and Greeks and Carthaginians *long before them*, did little beyond exploiting the coastlands. Rome went farther, but was held up by the Great Desert. For long centuries Central Africa had been left to itself, protected from the teeming north by the Sahara, and on the south and west by cannibals and tribes who made human sacrifice a matter of ritual.

Then the prophet Mahomet preached his new religion, and it spread with the rapidity of a prairie fire, overwhelming both paganism and Christianity. The Sahara had no terrors for men born and brought up in the deserts of Arabia. They swept over all North Africa from the coast to where the sandy wastes gave way to the fertile stretches of Negroland. Inside a hundred years they had penetrated to the Atlantic, and everywhere they forced the new religion on the people.

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Kingdoms were founded of which Songhay and Bornu were the chief, but still the great bend south of Niger baffled geographers. The great Arab explorer El Edrisi, Abulfeda, and especially Leo Africanus, successively slave, convert to Christianity in Rome, and author of the book (in Italian) of *Bilad es Soudan* (The Country of the Blacks), still held to the "Nile the Negroes" and led it into the Atlantic by the river Senegal and Gambia.

They knew lake Maberia, which we call Lake Chad, and credited it with being the source of some of the rivers and the head of a chain of inland lakes which swallowed up the rest.

Then came the Portuguese with their coastwise navigation, and, with the classic learning of Prince Henry, they crammed the waters of the Niger into the Senegal River.

The habit of all land-locked peoples of giving names of their own to any river passing through their territory, regardless of what it might be called above and below, added to the misconception and puzzlement. Thus the river of Guien, which flows not far from Timbuktu, was considered to rise in Lake Chad and to be the river of Negroland.

The Arabs, traders or chroniclers, cared nothing for geography, but they were careful observers and lively writers about what they saw. What they wanted was slaves and gold, and because there was plenty of both in Africa, they came in constantly increasing numbers, settled in country that suited them, easily overcame the African tribesmen, and established states under kings and emirs. Especially they filled their treasuries by the sale of the surplus negro population.

Park was instructed to visit the city, but it proved

## The Mystery of the Niger

be impossible. He passed Kabara indeed, "the Port of Timbuktu," but with his scanty crew and hostile war-boats behind him, it proved hopeless. The first European to reach Timbuktu the mysterious was Major Laing, over twenty years later. He came overland from Tripoli, stayed a few days and was murdered, with the loss of all his papers, by men who professed to be his guides.

Timbuktu proved not to be a glorious city, but a squalid collection of mud buildings, distinguished only from any Eastern bazaar by its many mosques. It was simply a great caravan centre, and seems now likely to be supplanted by Gao or Gogo to the south.

Until the time of Henry the Navigator and Vasco da Gama there was little known of Africa except the Mediterranean coast. Europe looked upon that as a mere hive of pirates. The Berbers preyed on everybody at sea, and they even crossed over and held broad lands in Spain and Portugal. In time they were driven back to Morocco, and then the Portuguese in their turn attacked. The pursuit of the Moors led them on and on, till in 1498 Vasco da Gama doubled the Cape of Good Hope and reached Calicut.

The Portuguese had all the wealth of India before them, but they had nothing like enough men to hold what they took. Moreover gold in Africa and spices in India attracted them and not geography. Therefore they confined themselves to establishing posts and factories where there was fresh water and possibility of getting food supplies, and there were no incursions, still less explorations, in the interior. Portuguese enterprise soon tempted venturesome men from all the countries of Europe to join them. They came for gold and palm oil, and it was not long before they discovered that



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traffic in slaves was infinitely more profitable. They confined themselves to buying the negroes, for Kafilas from Bornu and Timbuktu and elsewhere brought down droves of black men to be shipped to the new plantations across the seas, and there was no need to organize expeditions inland. The caravan men brought tales of great and wealthy cities in Central Africa, and these were carried home to Europe and interested those eager for knowledge as much as those eager for money.

Barros, the Portuguese historian, says that Kings John and Manoel sent embassies to Songhay, then a powerful kingdom astride the Niger, and to Timbuktu and other vague cities of wealth. It is quite certain that if they ever went, nothing came of them.

In 1580 the crowns of Spain and Portugal were united. This proved very disastrous for Portugal, for the English and the Dutch were at war with Spain and attacked the Portuguese settlements on the African coast. As a result, of the forty forts in West Africa, fifteen passed to the Dutch, fourteen to England, four to the Danes, and three to the French. No more than four remained in Portuguese hands.

Before this Admiral Sir John Hawkyms had made at least two voyages to the coast to ship slaves for the West Indies; and when these forts and factories were taken over by us, England definitely began the traffic in slaves which did not end till 1807, when the General Abolition Bill was passed, but it was not till 1833 that the slaves actually in the colonies were declared to be free.

The slave trade made West Africa a very great interest to all the European nations. Senegal is the oldest of the French colonies there, and from the first, with a few intermittences, they devoted themselves to the promo-

# The Mystery of the Niger

tion of trade with the interior, while we confined ourselves to exploration. The French profited so much by what we discovered that they have a longer coastline and more actual territory than any other Power in West Africa.

A sturdy mariner, Richard Jobson, went out to the Gambia in 1620, only to find that a predecessor, Thompson, had been murdered by his own crew. This did not frighten him, and he sailed as far as Tenda, three hundred miles up, and returned to write an account of his voyage in *The Golden Trade*; but nothing definite from the trading side resulted, in spite of the fact that he heard of a city four months' journey farther inland, where the houses were roofed with gold. The book and its enthusiasm about vegetation and strange animals attracted a great deal of interest, but that was all.

The trade in slaves, however, flourished exceedingly, and at the beginning of the eighteenth century a company styled The Royal Adventurers of England contracted to supply three thousand slaves a year to British colonies in the West Indies.

## CHAPTER III

### THE AFRICAN ASSOCIATION SENDS OUT MUNGO PARK

SIR JOSEPH BANKS was the originator and the dominating figure in the African Association, and it had notable men on the Board. Among the original associates was Lord Rawdon, afterwards created Marquis of Hastings, for his career in India, where he

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was Governor-General of Bengal and greatly extended British supremacy in India. Other associates were the Bishop of Llandaff and Messrs. Beaufoy and Stewart.

The Association had scientific exploration as its main object, though commercial possibilities were not to be neglected.

They were all classical students, and some of them had read, or were aware of, what the Arab travellers had written. Therefore they began operations from the north. Ledyard, an American who had been a marine, and had made long journeys from sheer love of travel, was the first man selected. He was to cross from the Nile to the Atlantic. Unfortunately he got no farther than Cairo, and died there of a malignant fever. He was promptly succeeded by a Mr. Lucas, who had had an even more checkered career. He had been a slave in Morocco, and eventually came to be British Vice-Consul there. Thus he knew both the people and their language.

He started from Tripoli, intending to cross the Sahara, but after no more than five days came up against "revolting Arab tribes," and was forced to turn back. It seems probable that these were the black-veiled Tuaregs. Since penetration from the north and east seemed so unpromising, the Association turned to the west coast.

After we had expelled the Portuguese we took over their settlements, but these were no more than forts or fortified factories.

Bathurst, the capital of the colony of Gambia, was not in existence in Park's time, and except for Gorée we need not concern ourselves with the other settlements.

## Mungo Park Sent Out

Gorée had been a British possession for five years between 1758 and 1763, and became British again in 1800, and remained so till 1815. It has been superseded by Dakar as the capital of the French colony of Senegal, and this is now as well known for its great aerodrome as Gorée was for its slave traffic.

Major Houghton, the man chosen by the African Association as their explorer, was then Fort Major at Gorée. He had been Consul in Morocco and knew the Moors and their language.

Richard Jobson had gone up the Gambia in 1620, and Bartholomew Stibbs, in 1723, also sailed up the river, but beyond making it certain that it had no connection with the Niger, they did not prove much, and except for the steadily increasing profits of the slave trade, nothing was done from this side for something like three-quarters of a century.

Major Houghton started by land with no more than his personal servants, and to begin with was hospitably received at Medina, the capital of the defunct state of Wuli. From there he diverged to the Falème river, a southern tributary of the Senegal and the frontier line of the gold-bearing country of Bambuk. Into this state he marched and was murdered. His last communication, brought presumably by a *slati* or slave merchant, was: "Major Houghton's compliments to Dr. Laidley; is in good health; on his way to Timbuktu robbed of all his goods by Fenda Bukar's son."

This was a discouraging beginning for the new line of approach, but the African Association was pertinacious. Liberal terms were offered to anyone who would take up the venture in which Major Houghton had perished.

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Mungo Park was, no doubt, informed by Banks. At any rate, he applied and was immediately accepted.

He sailed from Portsmouth on the 22nd May, 1795, on board the African trader *Endeavour*, and arrived at the mouth of the Gambia on the 21st of the following month, at Jilifri, a squalid little town on the north bank, a little way up the river. There was nothing to keep them there, so the *Endeavour* went on immediately to Jonkakonda, then one of the chief trading stations on the Gambia.

The sullen muddy stream at Jilifri was in violent contrast with the Yarrow of his boyhood, where in bright stretches the stream babbled over a pebbly bottom, or wound its way through birchen bowers. The Gambia was deep enough to take sea-going ships a long way up, but that was its only good feature. The banks were a fœtid mangrove swamp, a sinister green at high tide, and at the ebb a loathsome expanse of mud with what looked like a wriggling mass of serpents and ill-omened reptiles rising from the slime to the line of high water.

An occasional clump of palms and the gaunt stems of here and there a cotton tree which clothes itself in large red blossoms before ever it produces a leaf, marked the inner line of the morass and the beginning of a seemingly endless plain covered with scrub jungle.

He lost no time in making observations. There were swarms of fish, but none that he could recollect to be known in Europe; and after the sharks in the estuary, he made the acquaintance of the alligator and the rhinoceros, which he thought might with more propriety be called the sea-elephant.

After a short stay at a place called Vincain, noted for the beeswax brought down by "the Feloops, a wild

## Mungo Park Sent Out

and unsociable race of people," the *Endeavour* went on, and reached Jonkakonda on the sixth day, and there Park disembarked.

Henry Beaufoy, the secretary of the African Association, had given him a letter of introduction to Dr. John Laidley, who had been for many years established as a factor on the Gambia, and on whom Park had also a letter of credit.

Dr. Laidley lived at Pisania, "a small village in the King of Jany's dominions, established by British subjects and inhabited solely by them and their black servants." Pisania was sixteen miles away, and Dr. Laidley came in immediately to invite Mungo to stay with him, and supplied him with a horse.

At Pisania, therefore, he arrived on the 5th July. There were two other white men there, brothers of the name of Ainsley, "but their domestics were numerous. The King of Jany extended his protection to them, and they did a large trade in slaves, ivory and gold."

At Pisania, Park settled for some time to learn the Mandingo language and to collect information about the interior from "the *slatis*, free black merchants," whose chief occupation was bringing down gangs of slaves for sale.

It was the beginning of the rainy season, and Park very soon got his first touch of malarial fever. On the 31st July he exposed himself to the night dew, while he was observing an eclipse of the moon, and was laid up for the whole of August and part of September, and "amused himself with drawing plants," besides collecting general information.

He divides the natives along the Gambia into four great classes: "the Feloops, the Jaloffs, the Foolahs, and the Mandingoes." The upper classes of all of

## Mungo Park Sent Out

then a French possession, and that up to that year over a million negroes had been landed.

The apparently superior humanity of the Mandingoes is accounted for by the constant arrival of *slatis* from the interior with gangs to fill the holds of ships bound for the west. These were bought by the ship-masters for sums which were beyond the means of the Senegal residents.

Mungo Park in spite of his fever, and most likely as the cause of it, since July to September are the unhealthiest months of a very unhealthy coast, visited a good many of the villages round Pisania and Jonkonda. He found that the pattern of the houses was of a very primitive kind and was identical with those he was to see later on his inland journeying. They were mere beehive-shaped huts, "small and incommodious hovels." There was a circular mud wall about four feet high, and upon this was erected a conical roof of bamboos and thatch, so that they looked like corn-ricks or blunt-headed sugar-loaves. There was no difference, except in size, between the house of the chief and the home of the humblest fisherman. The house furniture was equally elementary. Stakes sunk in the ground formed the legs of a bed made of lengths of bamboo covered with a bullock's hide or a mat. A jar for water and a few earthen cooking pots, wooden bowls and calabashes for dishes finished the plenishing.

Every man had as many wives as he could afford to keep, and each wife had a hut to herself, after the "Beehive" fashion of Brigham Young. The negro harems were railed in a cluster by a fence made of bamboo and wicker-work hurdles and went by the name of *sirks*.

Each village had its *bentang*, a wide platform set

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at this time hold in it supports not more than three annual ships ; and I am informed that the gross value of British exports is under £20,000."

French, Danish and American ships were constantly coming in, and since the traders from the interior counted in cowries, a system of barter was inevitable. From the very early days, iron was the commodity most desired, and so it came about that a *bar* of iron was the measure by which the value of all other goods was determined. Twenty leaves of tobacco constituted a *bar* of tobacco ; a gallon of rum was a *bar* of rum. Values naturally varied with the seasons and the number of ships in the river, and so, in Mungo Park's time, the white traders standardized the *bar* at two shillings sterling. Thus a £15 slave was said to be worth a hundred and fifty *bars*.

The price of slaves depended upon the arrival of caravans from the interior and the number of shippers in port, but the average for a "prime" slave was eighteen to twenty pounds.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE START FROM PISANIA

ON the 2nd December, 1795, Mungo Park left Dr. Laidley's house at Pisania. Laidley and the two brothers Ainsley accompanied him on the first day's march.

His following and equipment were quite surprisingly small, though Major Houghotn had started with an



## Mungo Park

equally small outfit. As interpreter he had a negro called Johnson, who had been sold into slavery in Jamaica. There his master gave him his freedom and took him to England, where "he resided for many years." There is no mention of how old Johnson was, but since he spoke Mandingo, he must have been more than a mere boy when he was carried off to Jamaica. It was arranged that he was to get ten *bars* (say a pound) a month, and his wife five, while he was away. On Dr. Laidley's recommendation Park also "engaged" a sprightly youth called Demba, who was to be freed if he behaved well. Demba was a Serawooli, a tribe settled on the Senegal river, and in addition to his native language was also fluent in Mandingo.

Park bought a horse for himself and asses for the interpreter and his personal servant. The horse, "small but spirited," cost him £7 10s. The price of the donkeys is not given.

Park certainly did not fit himself out extravagantly: "a few changes of linen and other necessary apparel; an umbrella, a pocket sextant, a magnetic compass and a thermometer, together with two fowling-pieces and two pair of pistols."

He carried provisions for two days only, and an assortment of beads, amber and tobacco to serve for purchases and the presents which in Oriental fashion were tiresomely imperative. In this list the beaver and dress which Sir Richard Burton sneered at are not mentioned—"Poor Park, black beaver tile and blue coat with brass buttons, with shoeless feet"—but this beaver proved most valuable and was the only thing that remained when all else was stolen. Without this tall hat we should not have got Park's notes and journal, for it was inside it that he carried his memo-

## The Start from Pisania

randa. Probably the negroes attached some kind of religious significance to it, and the "Moors" thought the notes were charms. At any rate, when everything else was carried off the tall hat remained. . . . Two slave merchants (*slatis*) joined him, bound for Bondu and a *Bushrin*, freeman Mahometan, bound for Bambarra, and there was a negro called Tami, also a Moslem, who had been doing blacksmith work for Dr. Laidley, and was now retiring with his savings to Kasson. The whole party with Park himself numbered seven.

Even those who had donkeys travelled on foot, driving their beasts before them. Park noted in his journal that he gathered that Dr. Laidley and the two Ainsleys never expected to see him again, but naturally they did not say so. They turned back to Pisania at one o'clock on the 3rd December, and Park "rode slowly into the woods." He had gone a bare three miles, when a party of men ran up and stopped the asses. They said that till "customs was paid" to the King of Walli the party could not go on. He got rid of them by handing over a "present" of four *bars* of tobacco for the King.

Next morning, shortly after the start, he was again called on to pay customs duties to the King of Wuli, whose capital was at Medina, and on the third day, about noon, he reached that place.

Medina was the first tribal capital which he had seen, and it was "largely pagan," though there were a good many *Bushrin*. The Kafirs or *Sonakies* (drinkers of strong liquor) held the government, but consulted the Moslems. The town had from eight hundred to a thousand houses, and, like all the towns through which he was to pass, was surrounded by a high mud wall,

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just as eager to get these *saphie* mascots as the followers of the Prophet. Written words were taken to be magic and therefore effective against all evil. The Burmese youth has them let into his arms and legs by a monk. The negroes, if they get enough of them, stowed them in rams'-horns.

Park later found this conviction that all letters were potent charms a most useful way of paying for food, when he had nothing in the way of money or possessions.

The old King of Wuli gave Park a guide as far as Kujar, his frontier town. At Kujar this man turned back, but engaged three negro elephant hunters to show him the way on. One of these three vanished during the night with his advance wages. The other two, after only a short way out, insisted on stopping to make an offering to the spirits of the wild. This consisted in muttering some phrases over a stone, spitting upon it and then throwing it on ahead. They did this three times and then went on without more ado.

The ground had been rising steadily in gentle slopes, covered with scrub and cane-growth higher than a man, and in the strip between Wuli and Bondu became a sort of no-man's land, after the common fashion of Eastern countries where a wilderness is thought to be a protection against cattle-thieves, and here in Africa, in Park's time, against slave-raids.

Water holes were not at all common, and at the one where the guides had proposed to halt, the fresh ashes of a fire were found. The elephant hunters decided that the party that had halted here to cook food must be thieves, so they trailed on till it was quite dark. The watering place was little better than a mud-



THE BLACKSMITH'S QUARREL. Page 26

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hole, and there they bivouacked, "more than a gunshot from any bush."

Next day before noon they reached Falika, the first town in Bondu, and Park found that they had entered country of a quite different character. Bondu state lay astride of the parting ridge between the Gambia and the Senegal rivers, and so was better drained and quite surprisingly fertile. The people, too, were much superior to the Bantu negroes of the coastal tracts. They were Fulahs, a markedly distinct race. Except that they came from the east, not much is known about them even now; but well-chiselled features, long straight wiry hair, and a complexion which was copper-coloured and not black, made them easily distinguishable.

They came west in a trickle, not as a conquering army, or as a mass flood. At first they were pastoral and therefore nomadic, but when they reached the Niger-Gambia watershed they found that the country beyond was no place for flocks and herds, so they settled down, and soon with natural increase and new arrivals became the dominant race and founded a kingdom known as Fulahdu. They had been followers of the Prophet, and when the Berbers came south across the desert they became fervent Moslems and spread the faith over the whole of the Western Sudan.

Park specially mentions that the Fulahs melt butter over a gentle fire and so get the *ghi*, universal in India, and used in the same way, for cooking and for smearing over the hair and the body.

When Park visited Bondu he found that it was markedly Mahometan, and had not merely mosques, but Moslem schools. Since the state covered the main trade route from the farther interior, transit dues were

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levied on all loaded animals, and consequently Bondu was far more prosperous than the neighbouring states.

There was a sort of frontier officer here who agreed to accompany Park to the capital in consideration of the payment of five *bars*. That is how Park puts it, but probably the officer wanted to find out what the traveller's real object was. None of them, not even excepting the King himself, could understand, or even believe, that anyone would travel merely to see new countries.

The journey to Fatikonda took him eight days, but he halted for one at Kukaranu, where his blacksmith companion Tami left him for his own people, after a violent quarrel with another fellow-traveller. Park managed to reconcile them and, since food was cheap, bought a bullock for six small pieces of amber. Repletion soothed ruffled feelings.

He had now branched off to the north and got into the Senegal basin, where he found he was in the sphere of the French traders. These penetrators had characteristically brought quantities of thin gauze, which was much coveted by the women "because it displayed the shape of their persons." If their dress was diaphanous, their manners were turbulent. They clamoured for amber, beads and other frippery, and when they got these went on to tear Park's cloak, cut the buttons off his boy's clothes, "and were proceeding to other outrages," presumably Park's own buttons, when he decided that it was no place to stop at.

He mounted and rode on to another halting-place, where the party "lay down by their bundles and passed an uncomfortable night with heavy dew."

Next day he reached the Falemé, a rapid and rocky

## The Start from Pisania

stream with great fields of millet on its banks and extensive fisheries where the smaller fish were treated much in the same way as the Burmese do to produce the evil-smelling *ngapi*, which has been condemned as anchovy sauce gone bad.

Park mentions that the Falemé was so clear that the bottom could be seen and the water came up to his knees as he rode over.

Major Houghton had been roughly treated and robbed of most of his baggage at Fatikonda, and Park was not without anxiety when he reached the capital on the following day. He knew it was the custom for travellers to go to the palaver tree and wait there until someone offered to put them up. A "respectable *slati*" was not long in inviting him to his house, and he had been there a bare hour when a summons came from the King. Park was not a little puzzled when the messenger took him across some cornfields outside the town, but it was explained to him that this was the rule for a private audience, and as a proof of it he found the monarch seated on a mat under a tree.

When Park said he had not come to trade—which meant to buy slaves—but merely to see the country, it was very evident that he was not believed, but he was told to make a formal call in the evening. He found the chief to be housed in what was simply a collection of the ordinary beehive mud huts, surrounded by a very high wall. These were arranged in courts, which communicated with one another by a regular rabbit warren of passages, with sentries at all the doors.

The King was called Almani, a Moslem name, but Park was assured that he was a Kafir. After the way he had treated Houghton there was good reason to be

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were anxious to have a little blood drawn off. Park omits to say whether he obliged them. "They were ten or twelve in number, most of them young and handsome," and he told them so, when they began rallying him on the whiteness of his skin and the prominence of his nose, which they said must be due to baths of milk while he was a baby, and nipping of the bridge of his nose as he grew up.

This was a kind of coquetry that Park cannot have been accustomed to on Ettrick-side, but he did the obvious and was lost in admiration of the glossiness of their skins, the seductive depression of their noses and the abundance of their hair. They saucily said this was "honey-mouth," and that unabashed flattery of this kind was not the custom in Bondu. All the same Park got the impression that they rather liked it, and the present they gave him of some fish and a jar of honey was perhaps a hint that they did not object to blandishment.

He does not say how he got away, but a message came from the King to say that he was to come before sunset. Since it was impossible to appear without some present, Park took some beads and a little writing-paper. Almani was quite gracious. He gave Park five drachms of gold "out of pure friendship" and added to this a still greater favour. It was the rule to examine the baggage of every traveller passing through the country, but this was to be dispensed with in Park's case and he was at liberty to go when he pleased. Park regretted his blue coat, but it had had its uses after all.



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## CHAPTER V

### THE BEGINNING OF TROUBLE

PARK stayed only two full days in Fatikonda and set out on the 23rd December for Kajaaga, the state lying between the Falemé and Senegal rivers. By eleven o'clock they reached the Bondu frontier village. He had intended to halt there, but was told that, as usual, the frontier strip was full of bad characters, and so, when all the villagers were asleep, the party started off and marched all night.

After a halt before daylight to rest and fodder the donkeys, they started again and reached Joag, the frontier town of Kajaaga, in the afternoon. It was a jungle march all the way, but there was a steady rise, and towards the Falemé there were considerable hills.

The people of Kajaaga were quite different from the Fulahs. They were jet-black, much like the Joloffs nearer the coast, whom we look upon as the typical negroes. They called themselves Serawoolis, and Park adopts that name, but says the French called them Seracolets. Like the Bondu people they were great traders and carried on brisk business with the French in gold and slaves, besides having dealings with the British factories on the Gambia. They were also the chief traders with the native states east of them; Kasson, Kaarta, Ludamar and the northern parts of Bambarra.

Joag, the frontier town, was a place of about two thousand inhabitants, and not only was the whole

## The Beginning of Trouble

surrounded by a high loopholed wall, but each house had a wall of its own.

The headman, who was a rigid Musalman, was not known as an Alkaid, but was styled *Duté*, a name which was in general use from this point on. Park says the *Duté* had a great name for hospitality but he sent his visitor off to sleep at the *bentang* tree. It was festival time and there was a great deal of singing and dancing, the dancing startling rather than graceful.

About two in the morning a party of horsemen rode up and dismounted. They were headed by the second son of the King of Kajaaga. This youth told Park that no duties had been paid and that no present had been sent to the King. The penalty was confiscation of everything, goods, transport and following, and Park himself would have to go to Maana, the capital.

Park said he was quite willing to go, when he had settled up his liabilities in Joag. In the meantime he handed over the five drachms of gold that Bondu had given him, but the troopers were not satisfied with this. They ran through his baggage and took half of it and went off for the night. Next day all Park's following urged him to turn back, all the more because they had nothing to eat.

In the afternoon an old negro woman gave him a few handfuls of ground-nuts. Park somehow greatly attracted the negresses. Quite often when he was in great straits they gave him food and drink.

This particular old woman did not wait to be thanked and was not long gone when a messenger came to say that a nephew of Demba Sego Jala, the Mandingo King of Kasson, was coming to see him. This young man had been sent by his uncle to settle the disputes which had risen between the two states, but four days'

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argument with Batchera, the Kajaaga King, had had no result, and the envoy, whose name was the same as his uncle's, on his way back had heard of the white man at Joag. He had a large retinue, and this probably scared away the horsemen. At any rate, we hear no more of them.

Demba Sego offered to escort him to Kasson, and Park immediately agreed, and the party started on the morning of the 27th December after a very unmerry Christmastide.

They arrived the same evening at Sami on the Senegal, a few miles above the former French trading station of St. Joseph. The reason for its abandonment is not given, but the Senegal here was "a beautiful but shallow river, moving slowly over a bed of sand and gravel, with very high banks covered with verdure."

Next day they marched up river to Kayi, where the banks were equally high, and there was a deep black pool, formed by a cataract which poured over a ledge of whinstone rocks. Possibly the fact that half Kayi was on one side of the river and half on the other accounted for it, otherwise the leaving of the gravel bed in order to push the animals one by one "down a sort of trench or gully that was almost perpendicular," and forty feet high, seemed rather eccentric. They all got safely over, though Park's donkeys resisted violently and delayed the whole party. Park and Demba Sego were the last to cross in a very coggly canoe, and Demba's curiosity about a tin box upset it, but they got nothing worse than a ducking.

Demba was now in his uncle's territory, and his manner became much less amiable. A long day's march took them to Tisi, where the young man's

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father, Tignty Sego, brother of the King, was in charge. The son demanded more dues, but the father limited himself to saying that he had only once before seen a white man. From his description this evidently was Major Houghton.

It was understood that Park was to go to Kuniakary to see the King, but a good deal happened to delay him. First of all a slave ran away, and Demba sent out, not only all his mounted men, but also Park's pony borrowed for the purpose. The slave was caught, flogged, and chained up, but the very next day the young man got orders to go to Gedumah over a horse-stealing case. He not only "borrowed" Park's pony again, but said he must have the saddle and bridle because it "would impress the Moors."

This caused a delay of ten days at Tisi, but it also gave him an opportunity of seeing how the faith of Islam was extended. An embassy of ten men came from Futa Larra, a state to the west of Bondu, and announced that unless the entire population of Kasson became Musalmans, Futa Larra would certainly join Kajaaga in the impending war between that state and Kasson. This alliance would have been very embarrassing, so the people were told that they must be converted, and converted they were without more ado. The conversion consisted in the public offering up by one and all of eleven prayers. This was taken to be sufficient proof that they had renounced paganism and embraced the doctrines of the Prophet.

At last on the 8th January Park announced that he must leave for the capital. Tignty Sego said he could not do that without paying the regular dues and also giving a personal present for "the kindness that had been shown him." Demba came round the next day

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to collect the present. Park offered seven *bars* of amber and five of tobacco. Demba said it was not enough and set about examining the bundles. He took what he fancied, and when he had gone Park noted ruefully that, while at Kajaaga half his stores had been carried off, the Tisi people took half of what remained.

On the 10th January Park set out without further fleecing and in the afternoon reached the village of Jumbo, the birthplace of Tami, the blacksmith. The whole population, headed by Tami's brother and a singing man, came out to welcome him with song and dance.

In spite of the blacksmith's praises the women and children were too uneasy to come near a man of "such uncommon appearance," but before he left, after a day's halt, they were so far reassured as to "examine the texture" of his clothes.

Instead of taking the direct road to the capital, Park went to the village of Silo to collect money due to Dr. Laidley in payment of "effects to the value of five slaves." The *slati* received him quite amicably, but Park had not been there three hours when the King sent his second son Sambo Sego to ask why he had not come straight to Kuniakary and what took him to Silo. The *slati*, Salim Daucari, undertook to do all that was necessary and went with Park the same evening to the capital.

It was not till next day that he saw Demba Sego Jalla. The King, a man of about sixty, was quite affable, in spite of the fact that Park's "present was inconsiderable." He said he remembered Houghton and had given him a white horse, but except that the Major had gone on to Kaarta and had been killed by the

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Moors he knew nothing. He gave Park a white bullock, which was considered a very noble gift, and advised delay. There was likely to be war between Kaarta and Bambarra, and until messengers he had sent returned, it would not be wise to move, all the more because Kaarta might be involved in the Kasson-Kajaaga quarrel.

Park therefore went off to stay at Silo with his *slati* friend and got the value of three slaves from him. It is significant that this became known immediately, and Sambo Sego came to say that the present to the King had been paltry, and that now half the sum Park had collected must be handed over. Moreover Sambo and the friends with him, all relations of the King, must get a handsome present.

Luckily Salim Daucari was a very prominent Gambia trader and was also an honest man, which was more to the purpose. He induced Sambo to take sixteen *bars* of European goods and some powder and shot in satisfaction not only of these, but of all other demands.

When the messengers came back from Kaarta they said that fighting had not yet begun and that, with luck and care, the party might get through. Park therefore set out and on the way met great numbers of people making for Kasson to escape the expected Bambarra invasion. On the other hand, the men who had guided him from Kasson went back to join in the invasion of Kajaaga.

In consequence of this threatening outlook, the "landlord," at a place called Fisura, demanded a huge payment before he would undertake to show the way. Luckily, however, he took a great fancy to Park's blanket, and when he got this, himself undertook to

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act as guide. To make sure of the omens, however, he stopped suddenly at a lonely part of the road, took out a bamboo whistle and blew three times. Then he laid his spear across the road and mumbled some phrases, which might have been prayers, and whistled again very loudly. Nothing happened, so he set off again cheerfully. Park says he was a "technical Mahometan of the Johar sect," who drink strong liquor, which a Musalman should not do. It was easier to patter over prayers than to give up pleasant habits.

Kemmu, the Kaarta capital, lies in a wide open plain, absolutely bared by the felling of trees for building or fuel. Several large villages were passed by the way, but they were deserted. The Bambarra people had been there two years before and ravaged the countryside. That was ominous enough, but nothing happened to interrupt their march, and the party arrived in Kemmu in the early afternoon. They were immediately surrounded by a dense crowd in the court where the King's hut stood.

In reply to the request for an audience, the King said he would see Park that evening, and the messenger would show him where he was to stay. This messenger had a large stick, and was supposed to keep the people off, but either could not or would not. Anyhow, the hut, which was a large one, was instantly filled with an inquisitive mob, and this crush was repeated thirteen times before sunset, by all who could manage to force a way in.

At sundown the King said he was ready to receive Park, but the change was not great. The monarch's hall was as crowded as the guest hut, except that a narrow lane was left free to let Park approach.

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"Daisy" (Dési) Kurabarri was seated on a two feet high mud dais, covered with a leopard skin.

"I was astonished at the number of his attendants," says Park, "the fighting men on the King's right hand and the women and children on the left." The King was sympathetic enough, but not very encouraging. Relations between Kaarta and Bambarra had been very threatening for some time, and it was risky to cross from one state to the other. His advice was that Park should go back to Kasson and wait till the war was over, which would naturally be when the rains broke.

Park's account of how the war was brought about is characteristic of the state of Africa at the time, and is perfectly usual, not only in Africa, but in many other parts of the world where there are numbers of native states with only a veneer of civilization, notably the Shan States of Burma before we took them over.

Some Arab cattle thieves stole four bullocks from a Bambarra frontier village, and sold them to the headman of a Kaarta township. The wronged villagers claimed their cattle from the *Duté*, who refused to give them up. Then they appealed to Mansong, the King of Bambarra. Mansong was jealous of the prosperity of Kaarta, so he announced that he was coming to Kemmu in the course of the dry season and therefore Dési, the Kaarta King, was to have all the houses swept and everything prepared for the accommodation of this force. In order that there might be no mistake about what this meant, a pair of sandals, made of iron, were added, and it was explained that till these sandals were worn out in his flight, Dési would never be safe from the arrows of Bambarra.

Kaarta naturally took up the challenge, but, possibly out of kindness or overweening confidence, issued a



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rains put an end to it. It was the normal state of affairs and only ceased when it was necessary to plant the crops, when moreover the whole country was impassable.

## CHAPTER VI

### MADE PRISONER IN LUDAMAR

MUNGO PARK's departure from Kemmu was spectacular. A cavalcade of about two hundred horsemen, with three of Dési's sons, came to see him off. The greater part of them went back to the capital the same evening, and he was told to make his way to Jarra as fast as possible, so that the rest should be free to go back to fight Bambarra.

The first night was spent in a village called Marina, and it was ominous that, while he slept, thieves came into the hut, cut open one of his bundles and carried off a quantity of beads, some of his clothes, and a packet of amber and gold which happened to be in one of the pockets. Naturally he complained to his escort, but they merely listened and nothing came of it.

The next day, in spite of oppressive heat, they marched till four in the afternoon, and it is characteristic of Park's zeal and thoroughness that he questioned some negroes who were gathering *tomberongs*. These proved to be berries of *Rhamnus Ixus* of Linnæus. The negroes pound them and make cakes "which resemble in colour and flavour the sweetest gingerbread." The kernels are then shaken up in water to separate what meal remains, and this, with a little pounded millet,



A NEGRESS TAKES PITY ON PARK *Page 31*

## Made Prisoner in Ludamar

forms a pleasant gruel called *fondi*, which is the common breakfast in many parts of Ludamar. This lotus is found everywhere, but is most abundant in the sandy soil of Kaarta, Ludamar and the northern parts of Bambarra. Park notes that this no doubt was the origin of the name *Lotophagi* of whom Pliny wrote.

The same evening they reached Toorda, where all the rest of Dési's people turned back except two, who were to act as guides as far as Jarra.

They now travelled by night on account of the Moorish banditti, and the party was increased by about thirty fugitives, scared by the news of the Bambarra invasion. As a matter of fact, these Moorish brigands, whom they seemed to look upon as a permanent evil, were much more threatening than Bambarra, for they drove off sixteen cattle during the night from the place they next halted at and killed a youth who was herding them. He was carried to his mother's hut and died there after making a death-bed conversion to Mahometanism, which resulted from faltering *La Illah el Allah Mahomet Bassowl Allahi* (There is but one God and Mahomet is his Prophet).

Next morning they passed Simbing, the frontier village of Ludamar, where Major Houghton was deserted by his negro carriers. Park was told that he went on with some Moorish merchants who were going to buy salt in the Great Desert. After two days Houghton became convinced that they intended to rob him and said he was going back to Jarra. The merchants, who were Bushrin, replied by loading all his property on their camels and marched off. The Major made his way to a watering place called Tarra, where he died, but whether from starvation or was murdered, was not known for certain. The body was dragged

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into the woods, and "I was shown the place where his body was left to perish."

Jarra was reached on the 18th February, and Park describes it as a large town at the foot of some rocky hills. The houses were built of stone, with clay used instead of mortar. The greater part of the population was negro, but they were completely overawed by the Moors, whom they paid to be left in peace. These Moors were a mixed race, with Berber fathers and negro mothers, and Park was to find the issue most evil-minded.

At Jarra he was lucky enough to find a man Daman Jumma, a slave merchant from the Gambia, who had borrowed money from Dr. Laidley. This was six years before, but the *slati* did not repudiate the debt, which amounted to the price of six slaves. He took Park into his house and said that for the moment he could not pay more than the value of two slaves, but he helped to convert Park's amber and beads into gold, which was much more easily carried and hidden.

So far Park had found the people he came across merely a nuisance from their curiosity and the stolid way they sat and stared at him. Now he found these hybrid Arabs truculent and overbearing, so much so that they scared his servants into saying they would go no farther. They had a very unanswerable argument: Park might have the patience and the courage to endure, but they risked being seized and sold as slaves. Park had the magnanimity not to dispute the point, but he drafted a letter to the Emir Ali asking for permission to pass through Ludamar on his way to Bambarra, and to obtain the necessary present, exchanged his fowling-piece for five garments of cotton, and then told his servants they might go.

## Made Prisoner in Ludamar

They apparently waited to see what Ali would reply. At any rate, they went on with him a matter of three marches to a biggish town called Dina. There the attitude of the people was flagrantly insolent and violent. They tore open some bundles and carried off what attracted them, and the servants insisted on going back.

Accordingly on the 3rd March Park set out alone, but had not gone more than half a mile when he heard a halloo behind him. It was Demba, who had not the heart to finally desert him. It was a testimonial to both.

Before Johnson left, Park handed over to him his diary and most of his notes to take back to Dr. Laidley on the Gambia, but he kept copies for himself.

During the next few days he was actually hospitably received in the small villages, but it was because he was looked upon as a gratuitous show, rather than out of real friendliness.

At Dalli he was only two marches from Gumba, the first town inside Bambarra. It was unfortunately a feast day, and the entire populace surrounded the headman's house, dancing and singing, but as soon as they heard of the white man's arrival they streamed off to see what promised to be much more attractive. They came, rather eccentrically, in a sort of procession, two and two, with music before them. The music was a sort of flute; "but instead of blowing into a hole in the side, they blew obliquely over the end, which is half shut by a thin piece of wood." Though it was a march, it was by no means a march past. On the contrary, they sat down and glowered, and the music and dancing went steadily on and did not stop till midnight.

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Park intended to leave next morning, but was persuaded to wait for some of the townspeople who wanted to go to Gumba. He could not, however, face another night as a raree-show, so he moved to a negro village called Sami, where he was quite kindly received. The *Duté* killed two fat sheep and invited all his friends to meet the stranger—"the gentleness of their manners presented a striking contrast to the rudeness and barbarity of the Moors." Park proposed to start in the cool of the evening, and the *Duté* said he would guide him.

At the height of the feast, however, a party of Moors burst in and said they had Ali's orders to take him to Benaun and to use force if he did not come quietly. The reason given was not quite flattering, though it was in a way reassuring. Fatima, Ali's wife, had "heard so much about Christians that she wanted to see one." It was hopeless to resist, so Park was taken back to Dina, where he had already been so roughly treated.

During the two days' journey in excessive heat, the *Ramadan* (the fasting month) began, and the tempers of his Musalman escort became correspondingly soured.

He was taken before one of Ali's sons and found him and five or six companions "taking water into their mouths, gurgling and spitting it out again."

They handed him a double-barrelled gun and told him to repair it. Park naturally said he could not, and the young man then, rather inconsequently, said he must give up his knives and scissors. Demba, who was doing interpreter, said his master had no such things, which so enraged Ali's son that he snatched up a musket and was only prevented from firing by his companions, who snatched it out of his hands.



EMPLOYED AS A BARBER BY THE EMIR ALI

## Made Prisoner in Ludamar

Demba very excusably wanted to run away and tried to do so that night, but found that it was impossible, for a strong guard was posted over the hut. Next morning they were marched off as prisoners over a sandy waste in a blazing sun. There was no water, but Park found that sucking a kind of gum at any rate kept his *mouth moist*.

About five in the evening they reached Benaun. This proved to be merely a wide expanse of ground, covered with tents, pitched without any regard to order, and with great herds of cattle, camels and goats wandering where they pleased among them.

The moment he was seen great crowds of men, women and children came rushing up. Those who could get close set about pulling at his clothes, but the crush was so great that they could do no more than show what they would like to do. It was only with great difficulty that he was hustled and pulled through to the tent where the Emir was.

Inside it was nearly as bad as among the rabblement outside, and the only free space was where Ali sat upon a black leather cushion, clipping his thin moustache, with the help of a hand mirror, which a woman held before him.

Ali was an old man with a long white beard and a most evil face. He scowled malignantly at Park and asked if he spoke Arabic. When he was told that he did not, it did not seem to occur to him to do more than go on glowering. The women of his household were by no means so impassive. They pressed forward, pawed Park all over, counted his fingers, as if to satisfy themselves that he was a *human being*, rummaged in his pockets, unbuttoned his waistcoat and squealed at the whiteness of his skin.



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Fortunately the call to prayer stopped these familiarities, but before they said their prayers a hog was brought in, and Ali in dumb show invited Park to kill and eat it. Since the fumbling of the palace hussies had proved that he had neither knife nor scissors, this was mere wanton savagery. Someone let loose the unclean beast, and the hog, with a better idea of what was called for, made pig-like darts among the assembled courtiers, and after scattering them, finally very appropriately found shelter under the couch on which the Emir was sitting.

Prayers and the pig thus put an end to this brutish ferocity, and Park was taken to the tent of Ali's chief slave, but was not allowed to go inside. A mat was flung on the sand at the entrance, and there he spent the night. They gave him a little boiled corn with salt and water, but all through the night inquisitive groups came to gape at him.

## CHAPTER VII

### ESCAPES AND REACHES THE NIGER

EARLY next morning Ali came with a few attendants, all of them mounted, and Park was taken to a small hut. It was very primitive, simply made of corn stalks set on end, with a flat roof, also of cornstalks, supported by forked sticks. The hog was brought along also, and with savage malice was tied to one of these. It proved an unfailing attraction to the small boys, who came to pester and stir it up.

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Their parents came in regular relays, and "I was obliged to take off one of my stockings and show them my foot, and even to take off my jacket and waistcoat and show them how my clothes were put on and off: they were much delighted with the curious contrivance of buttons . . . and in this manner I was employed, dressing and undressing, buttoning and unbuttoning, from noon to night . . . and from sunrise to sunset. I was obliged to suffer, with an unruffled countenance, the insults of the rudest savages on earth."

Inside a week Johnson was brought back from Jarra. He had with him a bundle of Park's clothes, and these were overhauled piece by piece in search for possible gold and amber. When none was found they were put in a "cow-skin bag" and pitched in a corner of the hut, but three men came later, and, after more rummaging, carried off everything but the clothes he was actually wearing. He had had the foresight to bury at night a pocket compass, but they found his spare one, and this greatly puzzled them. For want of any better explanation Park told Ali that it pointed out where his mother was, and that, if she were dead, it would point to her grave. The old ruffian turned it over in his hand several times, and when he found that the needle always pointed the same way, came to the conclusion that it was magic and gave it back. It did not interest him to know where Park's mother might be, alive or dead.

Apparently the boy Demba and Johnson also were kept prisoners in the corn-stalk hut. Demba was sent out during the day to gather withered grass for Ali's horses, but he was in the hut at night, for Park was awakened by feeling a touch on his shoulder and sprang up. The intruder, whoever he was, jumped back,

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tripped over Demba and sprawled over the pig. The pig retaliated with tusks and loud squeals, and the man screeched. Instantly the whole camp was in a state of tumult, like a hive of wild bees suddenly disturbed, or a frontier village with a knowledge that raids to steal cattle or kidnap men and women were common experiences.

While everyone was asking what had happened and nobody could explain, Ali galloped in on a white horse, and the turmoil ceased with the suddenness of the centre of a cyclone. Park notes that Ali always rode a white horse with its tail dyed red, and remarks that he was a terrible old man equally feared and hated. Park was told that the Emir not only never slept in his day tent, but went out regularly to some small sleeping place a good way off, and where he was to be on any given night was not known to anybody, not even to his slaves and womenkind.

We are not told that anyone was put to death over this affair, which is unexpected; but, to prevent any more two in the morning alarms, the pig seems to have been removed. At any rate, we hear no more of it, and the small boys were deprived of their morning's amusement to come and beat it.

It seems singular that Park was not murdered. A council of chiefs met to debate the matter. Some wanted to have him put to death; others voted for no more than the cutting off of his right hand, and it was left to a fiendish nine-year-old boy, a son of Ali's, to tell Park that the end would be to put out his eyes, "which resembled those of a cat."

Seemingly it all rested with Fatima, the chief wife, who was a noted beauty, and wanted to see Park intact. She weighed a great many stone and was so fat that she

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had to have two slaves to support her when she moved about. To be admired it was necessary to be fat, and in this attractiveness Fatima had no one to rival her.

Naturally Park was not far off despair, but his endurance and his determination not to be tempted into an outburst of temper were marvellous. He got a fever fit, and they came and twitched off the cloak which he had wrapped round him to produce perspiration. Once he wandered away to the shade of some trees on the outskirts of the camp. His intention was not to be mistaken, but Ali's eldest son came out with a party of mounted men. One of them levelled his pistol and drew the trigger, but twice it missed fire. As he was cocking it again, Park said he would go back with them, and was allowed to do so, with the threat that the next time he wandered from his hut anyone would be authorized to shoot him.

With the beginning of April there came a series of sand-storms. The simoon from the Sahara had set in, and the heat was so great that it was painful to hold the hand opposite the crevices of the reed hut, and even the slaves put on their sandals to pass from one hut to another.

In spite of this he was trailed round in the evenings to be exhibited to four different wives, each in her separate establishment. They were all very corpulent and had their feet and their finger-tips dyed a deep saffron colour, but whether to impress him, or because of the *Rozā* (as in India they call the fast month), or whether it was the regular thing, he did not learn. Now that he had been to see Ali's wives the other women of the camp, who had dwindled off as mere sight-seers, suddenly became inquisitive again and developed a desire for information which was very startling and

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might even be called shameless. It is a proof of Park's ready wit and versatility that he was able to baffle animal women just as effectively as brutal men.

Ali had gone off to bring in the "camel's load" Fatima, but before he could do this news came that the King of Bambarra was on the march to attack Ludamar. He had expected Ali to help him in the siege of Gedinguma. Ali had not only refused, but did so in such rude fashion that Bambarra promptly set out for Benaun.

Ali's son came in hurriedly, and an immediate move was made to another camping ground, a couple of marches off, in the middle of a thick wood, two miles from a negro town called Babaker.

Park was, of course, taken and found Fatima with Ali at this new camp. At her first interview with Park, Fatima affected a "repulsion at being near a Christian," but soon got over this and became quite talkative, and gave him a bowl of milk.

This was all the more welcome because the weather had become unbearably hot and water was much more scarce than at Benaun. Demba was sent out to get some, but was so cruelly beaten at the muddy pool, that he said he would rather die than go again. Park went out himself and was just going to drink when an old man and two boys "realized that he was a Christian," dashed the water from his lips and pointed to a trough where three cows were drinking. Park drank with his cheeks against a cow on each side, but the cows had the best of it and got down to the mud before he had satisfied his thirst.

All through May the heat and misery were intolerable, though Fatima, either from some trace of pity in her fleshy mass, or from some unexplained fascination,

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sent him more food than had been his ration up till then and added water, when she remembered.

Towards the end of the month Ali was asked by some rebellious Kaartans to help them in an attack on Dési. They offered him money, but it does not appear that they ever got any help, though Ali did set off with fifty men for Jarra. Park, on the intervention of Fatima, was allowed to follow the next day under a guard of twelve horsemen. Ali sent him the saddle and bridle and Park's own cob, which was nearly as starved as himself.

At the first halt he had to sleep in the open, and a sandstorm came on that lasted till four in the afternoon. It was so violent that he had to lie with his face to the ground and was in constant danger from the cattle which rushed about madly to escape the sand which lodged in their eyes and ears.

Johnson and Demba had come with him so far, but Ali now announced that the boy was "his slave" and must go back to Badaker—the "old fool" (Johnson) might remain. Park protested vigorously and got as near to imprudent language as he had ever done, but all Ali said was that the boy must go, and that if Park did not stop talking he would have to go too.

Park had faint hopes that at Jarra he might find a chance to escape, but in any case he had no option, for the Emir looked upon Demba as the white man's only interpreter and thought that without him Park could not get away.

On the 1st June, when he arrived in Jarra, he was unexpectedly allowed to take up his quarters with the *slati* Daman Jumma. Ali, in the meantime, collected all he could out of the Jarra people and paid them with

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promises. The Bambarra attack had been little more than a plundering raid, and their force had gone back because food ran out. Dési, however, was marching on Jarra, and it seemed hopeless to resist, all the more because those who had deserted Kaarta in March were now afraid of his vengeance.

Ali went back to Bubaker camp on the pretext of a national festival, but he allowed Park to remain with his friend Daman, and left only a few men behind.

Park thought the chance to escape too good to lose. The insurgents, as he calls the former subjects of Dési, who had fled to Jarra to escape service, now resolved to take refuge in Bambarra, and Park determined to go with them. He did get away, probably with the assistance of the *slati*, and Johnson started off with him; but when he found that Park was not going back to the Gambia, but was going east, he flatly refused to remain with him. Park again handed over his diary and notes and went on by himself.

He had several very narrow escapes. He had managed to take his horse with him, but it was so emaciated that it was little use and would have been hopeless if there had been active pursuit. Three Moors actually did catch him, but they proved to be simply robbers and not Ali's men. They seized what bundles he had, but found nothing worth taking except the cloak which had been his protection against rain by day and mosquitoes at night. That was all, for they did not think even his horse was worth the taking.

He went on and on without food and without water and nearly blinded by the glare from the scorching white sand. He had almost abandoned hope when there were flashes of lightning and a high wind. A



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black column came rushing up, and instead of rain there was a whirlwind of sand.

Again he almost resigned himself to die, but there came more lightning and then a tropical downpour. He tore off his clothes and spread them out to be soaked by the heaven-sent rain. Park found, as fasting men have since proved, that water alone will keep a man alive.

He saw a light in the distance and went towards it, but found it was a Moorish encampment, and he slunk off into the bush. Next morning he saw a column of smoke about twelve miles off and, after five hours' painful plodding, discovered that it was a Fulah village belonging to Ali. The headman slammed the door in his face, and he was limping painfully away when he saw some mean houses on the outskirts. There was an old woman spinning cotton in front of her hut. He appealed to her and she gave him food, and still more generously gave a feed of corn to his horse.

Unluckily a not over pleasant-looking crowd began to gather, and Park heard them discussing whether he should be arrested or not. Before they had made up their minds he set off, and had the presence of mind to go off north, as if he had no fear of the Moors. He was not interfered with, and after a detour of a couple of miles he took the Bambarra road again and was able to find a sheltered place in the jungle, where he lay down to get the sleep he had been without for two days and two nights.

It was rather fitful, for the mosquitoes were very troublesome; wild beasts howled close by in the early morning, and there were "tornadoes" every night which turned the dry water-courses into raging torrents. He had to drive his horse before him, for it was too

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utterly worn out to be fit for more than to struggle along, and Park himself was now quite barefoot.

Still he got food, and he was able to buy quite a large supply for one of the few buttons that the Luda-mar women had left him. The village headmen varied in the way they received him. Some took him for a pilgrim who had been to Mecca ; others, who had been to the Gambia, knew him for a white man, but not a very prosperous one ; some refused to let him into the village ; some were quite hospitable. One *Duté* begged for a lock of his hair, which he said would ensure him all the knowledge of the white man, but when he began to shear off the hair on one side, Park had to protest.

At last, on the 21st July, he reached Sego. It was market day and the roads were crowded with people. While he was picking his way over some marshy ground, one of the Kaartan refugees, whose company he had joined, said suddenly : " See the Joliba—see the Great Waters." It was a fine stream, " as broad as the Thames at Westminster," and it was flowing east. It was not such a surprise to him as it would have been when he left Europe. He had made many enquiries during his march and had been regularly told that it flowed towards the rising sun. He still had to discover the great southern bend, but at any rate he had found the Niger.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### SPENDS THE RAINS ILL AT KAMALIA

SEGO, the capital of Bambarra, which Park had now reached, was made up of four towns, two on the north of the river, called Sego Korro and Sego Bu ; and two on the south, Sego Su Korro and Sego Si Korro. Each had its own high mud walls. The houses were square and had flat roofs, not round and with the extinguisher tops, to which Park had become accustomed, but they were mud-built. Some of the houses had two stories and many were whitewashed. Mosques rose up in all the quarters, and Park estimated the population to be about 30,000.

A great many canoes swarmed on the river. They were dugouts, but of a very unusual kind. The hollowed-out tree trunks were joined, not side by side, but end on, so that they were inordinately long and narrow. They had neither decks nor masts, but Park says they were quite roomy. The ferry was a very profitable royal monopoly, and the fare was ten cowries.

Park went to the river bank and took his place in a queue of intending passengers, but after he had been there for two hours a messenger came to tell him that the King could not receive him until he knew what his business was. Meanwhile he was to go and stay at a distant village which the man pointed out to him. Park went there disconsolately enough, but no one in the village would take him in. When night began to close in and a rising wind threatened rain, while wild beasts were howling all round, Park was just meditating

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whether he would not have to climb a tree for safety, when a farm woman came in from the fields. She saw his forlorn state and not only took him into her hut, but cooked a fine fish for him. Then she spread a mat on the floor and said he might sleep there.

The good lady and her maids sat spinning cotton till very late and sang an improvised song of which the chorus was : "The poor white man has no mother to bring him milk : no wife to grind his corn."

In the morning he presented her with "two of the four brass buttons which remained on my waistcoat."

All next day he remained there, and the villagers, many of whom came to see him, very bluntly told him that he had many enemies in the town. The day after, another messenger came from King Mansong to ask why he had brought no present, and seemed to accept as a quite natural explanation that the Moors had robbed him of all he had. The man then said he was to stay where he was till the King chose to give orders. These orders came the same afternoon. Park was to go on his journey, but since Mansong pitied a destitute white man, he sent a bag of five thousand cowries. Park reckoned that 250 cowries ran to a shilling, so that the present was at any rate generous if not royal. One hundred cowries, he says, would buy a day's food for himself and corn for his horse.

The messenger further said that if Park was determined to go on, he himself had orders to guide him as far as Sansanding ; but he made it very clear that the King thought the traveller was demented. Why should he be so anxious to see the Joliba ? Were there no rivers in his own country, and was not one river much the same as any other ?

The guide, anyhow, did as he had been ordered. He

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took Park off the same evening to a village seven miles away. He was a cheerful and talkative person, and Park remarks that the language of Bambarra was a sort of corrupt form of Mandingo.

When this guide heard that Park proposed to go on beyond Sansanding to Jenne, he strongly advised him to do nothing of the sort : Jenne was only nominally a part of Bambarra. It was really a city of the Moors and the country beyond was entirely Moorish, and the killing of a Christian would be thought the obvious thing to do. As for talking of going on to Timbuktu, he might as well say he wanted to commit suicide.

Park's dogged resolution to push on was beginning to weaken, but he found time in the midst of his anxieties to make notes on the *shea*, the vegetable butter tree. It recalled to him the American oak, and the fruit was "rather like the Spanish olive." The kernel was embedded in a sweet pulp covered by a thin green rind. This is boiled, and the resulting "butter" keeps the whole year round without salt and "is whiter, firmer and to my palate of richer flavour than the best butter I ever tasted." It was a main support of Bambarra's inland commerce. Burton's opinion of *shea* butter was not so complimentary.

On the 24th July he reached Sansanding, now ruined and deserted, but then with a population of from 8,000 to 10,000 inhabitants and much visited by the Moors, who brought salt from Biru and beads and coral from the Mediterranean, which they exchanged for gold dust and cotton cloth.

He was soon to find that these Moors were as fanatical as the half-breeds in Ludamar. His guide took him by a roundabout way to the house of the *Duté* whom he calls Counti Mamadi. The *Duté* was

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friendly enough, but he was not able to keep off the Berbers, who shouldered away the negroes and, incited by a Sherif from Tuat in the Sahara, wanted to carry Park off to the mosque to repeat Musalman prayers.

The *Duté* saved him from this by maintaining that Park was "the King's stranger," but he could not prevent the insistence that the stranger should mount on a high seat at the door of the mosque, where a wild rabble gathered and gaped—"like the spectators at an execution." He killed a fat sheep, in spite of the queer popular idea that Europeans lived mostly on hens' eggs, and he put Park in a small hut, but could not keep off the mob, which hung about till midnight. Then at last Mamadi came and asked for *saphies*. If a Moor's talisman was good, a white man's must be better. Park wrote out the Lord's Prayer with a reed pen and some charcoal and gum water.

Next morning, before the Moors had time to gather, Park set off down the river and in four days got to Madibu, the last march through the woods, where he had his first view of a giraffe. Madibu appeared to him "a delightful village on the banks of the Niger, commanding a view of the river for many miles east and west," studded with small green islands, where the Fuladu were able to keep their cattle safe. The drawback was the amazing swarms of mosquitoes, which forced him to walk about most of the night, fanning himself with his hat. His clothes by this time were mere rags. At daylight he set off, feverish and with swollen arms and legs, and had not gone far when his horse got bogged and he had to leave it behind. He struggled on to Murzan, the latter part of the way in a canoe, which a compassionate fisherman put at his disposal. The fisherman's wife took him to Murzan,

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a village on the opposite side of the river from the much more considerable town of Silla, and there he got shelter, but only in a shed which was no protection from the tropical rain. He had fever coming on; he was half-famished; he had lost his horse; the five thousand cowries he had got from Mansong were nearly exhausted, and he was told that Jenne, the next town, was a place inhabited only by Moors who spoke no Mandingo.

Reluctantly he came to the conclusion that he must turn back. He had at any rate found the Niger and collected much information about Timbuktu and the Haussa towns lower down the river.

Accordingly on the 30th July he started westward, going the first part of the way by river in a canoe which cost him sixty cowries for the journey to Madibu.

As he was speaking to the *Duté* there a horse in a shed near by neighed. It was his horse which he had thought lost in the swamp, and it recognized his voice. Still more surprisingly he recovered his saddle. When the beast stuck in the morass the guide refused to carry the saddle, and Park flung it into the river. The negro then turned back, but later thought better of it and fished the saddle out, and because he was afraid of getting into trouble for carrying the "King's stranger's" property, took it back to Madibu in a canoe which he commandeered for the purpose. The horse had recovered somewhat, but was not fit to ride, and when Park started next morning he had to drive it before him. He got as far as Nyami and was then held up by continuous rain for three days, and from this on, the rains began in earnest. The whole country was flooded, and off the road the water was chest high, and the road itself was barely passable. The muc

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of the huts sagged, and at Sibiti three huts collapsed during the night he was there.

When he reached Sansanding he was told that it was reported all over the state that he had come as a spy. He arrived late at night and was ordered to leave before daybreak, and he had proof of it next day, for when he reached his next halt in the afternoon he was met by some negroes at the gate and taken round outside the walls. They told him they did it out of kindness, to save him from arrest. The headman, however, did allow him to shelter in a shed where *shea* nuts were being boiled.

These rumours were so persistent that he made a detour to pass Sego, and so avoid "the Moors and *slatis*," and he even had thoughts of turning south towards the Cape Coast, but decided that it was most important that he should see for himself how far up the Niger was navigable. It required all his determination, for during three successive days, in addition to flooded roads, he had nothing to eat but raw corn, "as his horse did."

He was warned off most towns, and at a village called Song he had to wait several hours outside the gate, with a lion so threatening that he had to climb a tree and was only let in about midnight by the *Duté*, who said he could not be a Moor, because "no Moor ever waited any time at the gate of a village, without cursing the inhabitants."

Beyond Jabbe he could see that the river came down from the hills, but the path was terribly bad, covered with long grass and bushes, and off it there were great holes, into one of which his horse slipped and was nearly drowned.

At Kulikoro he came across a Bambarra who had





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been the slave of a Moor and had travelled to many places in the Great Desert. He wanted to have a charm or amulet after the Musalman fashion, and asked Park to let him have a Christian *saphie*. He produced his *walha* (writing-board), and Park filled both sides from top to bottom. He does not mention what he wrote, but it was apparently written with soot and water, for his host washed it off and drank the water, and then, to make all sure, licked the board, after he had said a prayer or two on his own account. His fee, besides putting Park up for the night, was "a supper of dressed rice."

The village headman heard of it and sent half a sheet of writing-paper on which Park was to write a charm to get wealth. This was paid for with a little meal and milk. Park had a bullock's hide bed to sleep on, and "it was the first good meal and refreshing sleep I had enjoyed for a long time."

Next day he had hoped to reach Bamako but was misdirected and had to swim a creek, the third since leaving Sego. When he did reach Bamako he was disappointed with it—"only a middling town not quite so large as Marrabu," though it was a great market for silk. There were a good many well-to-do and reasonably civil Moors here, and they all told him he could not hope to get down to the Gambia so late in the year : he would have to cross the Joliba, and there were no canoes of any size. There is quite an imposing railway station now at Bamako, where the French railway from Dakar reaches the Niger, but at Park's first visit there was no alternative to the river road except a very rocky path over the hills by Sidibulu.

Park heard of a *kea* (singing man) who was going that way and started with him, but the *kea* found him

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and his crooked horse so slow, that he slung his drum across his back and skipped up the rocks where it was impossible to follow.

A couple of shepherds took him on from a small hamlet, but a half-dozen or so of brigands fell upon him, seized his horse and stripped him naked. At the last moment they relented a little and gave him back "the worse of his two shirts," and a pair of trousers, and just as they were going, threw back his hat, "in the crown of which I kept my memorandums, and this was probably the reason they did not wish to keep it." Apparently Park meant that the thieves thought the papers were *saphies* which might be valuable to him, but were of no use to them.

It is characteristic of Park that just then when he had lost everything but his trousers and shirt and his beaver hat, five hundred miles from the nearest European settlement, with no food and no money and in a flooded country, he did not despair. "The extraordinary beauty of a small moss in fructification caught my eye." He took it for a heaven-sent omen.

He crossed several stony ridges and reached Sidibulu, the frontier town of the Mandingo state. It stood in a fertile valley surrounded by rocky hills, which protected it from the raids of troublesome neighbours. Possibly for this reason the headman was called *Mansa*, which is the Mandingo word for king. The *Mansa* heard Park's story with sympathy, took his pipe out of his mouth, tossed up his sleeve and said: "You shall have everything restored to you. I have sworn it." He sent a message to Bamako to tell the *Duté* that "the King of Bambarra's stranger" had been robbed by the King of Fuladu's people.

Park stayed a couple of days at Sidibulu and then

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went on to a small village called Wonda. The people were quite friendly, but Park very naturally felt that his two garments, torn and covered with mud, did not do credit to the name of white man, and at Wonda he found privacy to wash his clothes and spread them on a bush to dry, while he lay in a cornfield. This inevitably brought on fever, and he was laid up nine days in Wonda; and he had a dish of maize blossoms, stewed in milk and water, which he says is only eaten in times of scarcity. On the ninth day two men brought him his horse and clothes from Sidibulu, but he found to his dismay that the spare pocket compass which he had been able to keep all this time had been broken.

On the 8th September he felt well enough to go on. He gave his horse, now thoroughly worn out, to his host in Wonda, and sent the saddle and bridle to the *Mansa* at Sidibulu. He cut down his half boots into sandals, which were easier to walk in, certainly, but led to his spraining his ankle, which laid him up for several days.

At last on the 16th September he reached Kamalia, a small town at the foot of some rocky hills. Here he was most kindly received by Karfa Taura, who was brother of an equally hospitable negro slave-trader at Kinyeto, a few marches back. Karfa Taura was herding together a batch of negroes, whom he intended to sell on the Gambia, when the rainy season was over.

When Park appeared before him the Bushrin was reading from an Arabic book to a party of *slatis* and asked whether his visitor could read Arabic. Park said he could not, so Karfa Taura sent for "a curious little book" which had been brought to him from the West. This proved to be the *Book of Common Prayer*,

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and the Bushrin was very pleased. He said it was impossible for anyone to cross the Jallonka wilderness now. A *kafila* could not manage it, and for a solitary white man to try was madness; he would give his guest a house and food, if he could eat the ordinary fare of the country, and when he got to the Gambia, Park might pay him what he liked. Park said he would pay the value of "a prime slave," and the Bushrin agreed as a matter of no consequence.

It was as well, for after three days a violent attack of fever came on, and for five weeks Park could hardly even crawl out of his hut.

At the beginning of December Karfa Taura went off to Kankaba, on the Niger, to add to his drove of slaves, and meanwhile commended his white guest to the care of "a good old man, who acted as the village school-master."

Month after month passed, and it was the 19th April before the *kafila* started for the coast. It was the second week in April before the *Ramadan* moon ended, and until this period of day-time fasting was over there could be no marching.

Park was, therefore, well over half a year at Kamalia, and he devoted a great deal of time to the study of the habits, beliefs, arts, manufactures, crops and occupations of the people, all of which were completely new to the England of his day and attracted extraordinary interest when his book was published. He had done a very great deal for geography, and his notes on crops, gold-dust and ivory fascinated the merchant adventurers.

He travelled down to the Gambia with the slave caravan along the regular slave route, and the matter-of-fact way in which he referred to the villainous traffic irritated many good people.

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The *kafila* was fairly large. There were twenty-seven slaves for sale and eight more were picked up on the march. Besides these there were the "free people," most of whom had two or more wives, and the domestic slaves brought the total up to seventy-three. There were six *jilli keas* (singing men) who headed the column when they entered a town, and sang praises of the hospitality they expected. The free people came behind the singing men; then the slaves, "fastened in the usual way by a rope round their necks, four of them to a rope, and a man with a spear between each four." After these came the domestic slaves and in the rear the women of free condition.

The order was changed when they marched through the Jallonka wilderness. There the guides and the young men led the way and the slaves were in the centre. This was not so much because it was really a wilderness, as because it was a no-man's land infested by raiding bands. In the first march they passed the burnt ruins of two towns. They started off almost at a run, which proved exhausting to many, and particularly to a girl called Neali who was left behind to be eaten by wild beasts.

The country was, in fact, "wooded but beautiful, interspersed with a pleasing variety of hill and dale and abounding with partridge, guinea-fowl and deer."

They started on the 23rd April, and after five days, during which they covered over a hundred miles, they reached Susita, a small village in the district of Kullo, which extended along the Bafing, or Black River, the main branch of the Senegal. Part of the road was very rocky, and Park and many of the slaves were very footsore: "Some of them snap their fingers which among the negroes is a sure sign of desperation."

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After the "wilderness" their troubles were not over. Village after village refused to admit the *kafila* as emphatically as Park himself had been warned off when he was alone. There was even a report that two hundred Jallonkas had gathered to plunder them, and a night march had to be made by a circuitous road. This was perhaps not so burdensome as it seemed, for "brown ants in the camp," and wild beasts howling round all night, made a severe trial.

On the 3rd May they reached Malacotta, the birth-place of the schoolmaster, and had a very hearty welcome. Every day a bullock was presented during the three days they were there. Malacotta was quite an enterprising place. Soap was made by boiling ground-nuts and adding a lye of wood-ash, and much iron ore was smelted and taken to Bondu to be bartered against salt. Yet the whole neighbourhood was much harried by Fulah bandits who stole through the woods and carried off cattle and anything else that came in the way.

At last on the 31st May Park was delighted to find himself on the banks of the Gambia, and three days later he reached Jindé, where he had said good-bye to Dr. Laidley a year and a half before.

Still it was not till the 10th June that he once more shook hands with a fellow-countryman, and on the 12th Dr. Laidley came up from Pisanía to welcome him. All his friends had given him up and believed that he had perished like Major Houghton.

There was no ship in the river when Park arrived, but, with unexpected luck, an American slave-ship, the *Charlestown*, arrived on the 15th. The factory was full of slaves at the time, and by the 17th rum and tobacco bought a full shipment of them. There were

## Spends the Rains Ill at Kamalia

130 all told, and among these Park notes that there were twenty-five Musalmans, taken prisoners in various places, who were able to read and write a little Arabic.

The *Charlestown* sailed from Gorée, but was held up there because of the difficulty in getting food supplies, and it was not till four months later, at the end of October, that she was able to start for South Carolina. It was the unhealthy season, and the ship's surgeon, four sailors and three negroes died before ever they got to Gorée.

Park undertook to act as doctor, and in a crowded ship, with no sanitary arrangements, and no exercise for the wretched slaves because of the weakness of the crew, he must have found it as trying as his land experiences.

Three weeks out the *Charlestown* sprang a leak and had to put into Antigua, thirty-five days after leaving Gorée, and even there ran on a rock before they got into St. John's Harbour.

Ten days later the *Chesterfield* packet, homeward bound from the Leeward Islands, called for the mails and Park was able to sail for home. He left on the 4th November, and after a short but stormy passage reached Falmouth on the 22nd December, two years and seven months after he had left England.

## CHAPTER IX,

### SURGEON IN PEEBLES

PARK lost no time in starting for London and arrived near the house of his brother-in-law, Dickson, before daylight on Christmas morning, 1797. He did not



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care to disturb them so early, so he wandered about and unexpectedly found the gate of the gardens round the British Museum open.

He walked in and came across Dickson, who was amazed and startled to see him, for he and most of the family had given up all hopes of seeing him again.

The African Association was equally surprised and delighted, and if Park had not been naturally shy and diffident, the public would have made a hero of him. Africa, at that time, except for the coast ports, was practically unknown, and Park's discoveries and the tales of his adventures and privations created great interest.

We are not definitely told so, but it is not very likely that he had quite recovered from his malarial attacks, and the sea voyage in a crowded slaver can hardly have set him up. Moreover, it is clear that Park was not a ready writer, and the diaries and notes he had miraculously been able to save must necessarily have been very fragmentary and must have made many calls on his memory. The African Association therefore decided that it would be right to issue a preliminary report on the results of the expedition. The drawing up of this was entrusted to Bryan Edwards, the Secretary of the Association, in consultation with Park and with Major Rennell, who had made a special study of all the authorities, ancient and modern, about the Niger.

Bryan Edwards was already known as the author of a *History of the British Colonies in the West Indies* and so had a certain literary reputation and, as Secretary of the Association, was the obvious man to compile the *Preliminary Abstract* as it was called. This was published in the Proceedings and was printed and



A FREQUENT DANGER

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issued separately to subscribers. As an annex there appeared Major Rennell's discussion of the routes followed and of the geography of the region generally. This was no doubt necessary, because Park had had no technical training and no survey instruments, and, during quite a considerable stretch of the return journey, not even a compass. Consequently it was retained and appeared eventually as an appendix to the later full edition of his travels written by Park himself.

He remained for six months in London and saw a great deal of Edwards, who acted as his literary adviser and possibly even more, and this had a very important influence on the tone of Park's manuscript.

Edwards had been a planter in Jamaica for many years, and became a member of the Provincial Legislature before he retired. He settled in the south of England and was elected to the House of Commons. There he became the most vigorous opponent of the party then beginning to clamour for the abolition of the slave trade.

Park stayed with him at his country seat, and had the benefit of Edwards's advice. This may account for the certain fact that though Park very sincerely pitied the slaves, he nowhere denounces the slave trade. He accepts it as an established custom and as a state of affairs which had existed from Old Testament days. He looked upon the question of its abolition or continuance as a matter of state policy which did not concern him, who was only writing an account of new lands and his own travels. All his friends in the African factories made much of their money in the trade. Therefore his attitude was absolutely neutral. He neither condemned it as a scandal, nor supported

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it as a source of great profit to the country and an absolute necessity for the lands in the new world which had to import labour.

Bryan Edwards was a notorious Anti-Abolitionist. His relations with Park were well known, so poor Park was violently attacked as a supporter of the traffic, while at the same time his pitiful tales of the miseries of the slaves were steadily quoted by the Abolitionists as a proof that he was utterly callous and even cruel-minded.

Those who knew Park as a kindly and humane man put down the passages in his *Travels* which seem to condone slavery as the interpolations of the Anti-Abolitionist Edwards, and this led some to say that a great part of the work was actually written by him. This malicious suggestion can neither be proved nor disproved. There is no mention of a draft copy, and the notes and diary which Park brought home were very early lost. Here and there there may be passages which suggest the practised writer, but that is all.

The preparation of the abstract of his travels and discoveries kept Park busy for six months, and it was not till June, 1798, that he went to see his mother at Foulshiels. His father had been dead for some years, but the farm was kept on by his brother Alexander. During the whole of that summer and autumn Mungo was engaged on the formal account of his travels. He wrote in the morning and rambled in the afternoon along the banks of the Yarrow. He also went regularly to Dr. Anderson's house in Selkirk, and became engaged to his daughter. By the end of the year he had finished his draft and he took it up to London, but it was the spring of 1799 before the book was published.

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Then in the summer he went north again, and on the 2nd August he married Alison, the daughter of Dr. Anderson. Like Park himself, she was tall and handsome, but had otherwise nothing particular to distinguish her.

Park's book of travels met with immediate success. A second edition came out almost immediately and was followed by several others during the next few years.

The African Association had paid generously and the book itself was not unprofitable, so the young couple started in quite comfortable circumstances. Nevertheless malaria and inveterate dyspepsia kept him very quiet at Foulshiels. Complete rest was what he most needed, but that agreed ill with his eager temperament. He had a sister married to a substantial farmer in the neighbourhood, and his brother Archibald was under-sheriff to Sir Walter Scott, then plain "mister" and sheriff-depute for the county.

Mungo thought of taking up a farm himself, and then, with returning health, his love of adventure got hold of him again. This was fostered by some vague talk of his making a survey of New Holland, or of taking up some post in New South Wales, but nothing came of it. Then, when in 1800 Gorée was taken from the French, he wrote to Sir Joseph Banks, pointing out how valuable a port it was for the opening out of Central Africa.

Then there came an offer in what was technically his profession. A doctor was wanted in Peebles, and in October, 1801, he took up the practice and established himself in a house at the head of the Brygate, with a small surgery and laboratory behind it.

In those days the duties of a country doctor were very trying and very ill paid. There were, he told

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departure of the expedition was first fixed for the end of February and then was postponed till September, 1804. In the meantime Park was advised to take astronomical observations and to study Arabic.

Accordingly he engaged Sidi Ambak Bubi, a native of Mogadôr, who had been interpreter to the Ambassador of the Mamelukes from Cairo, and took him down to Peebles. They stayed there till the middle of May and then Park finally gave up his practice in Peebles and went to Foulshiels. In September he was again summoned to the Colonial Office, and submitted a memorandum on what he considered should be the aims of the expedition. In this he shows that he was greatly impressed by the contention of Maxwell, a South African trader, that the Congo and the Niger were one and the same stream. Lord Camden advised him to consult Rennell, and Park therefore went to see the Major at Brighton. He stayed with him for some days, but failed to turn the Major from his belief that the river disappeared in Central African sands, and therefore that the expedition was much too hazardous.

Official forms caused further delays, but at last on the 2nd January, 1805, he got his formal instructions from the Colonial Office. Park was to have the commission of brevet captain in Africa; his young brother-in-law, Dr. Alexander Anderson, was to be second in command, with the brevet of lieutenant; and George Scott, a native of Earlston, was to go as artist draughtsman. A few boat-builders and artificers were also to be detailed. European soldiers to the number of forty-five were to be picked out at Gorée, where also transport was to be arranged. Authority was also given to draw up to £5,000 for expenses.

It was certain even then that the whole of the open

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coast would set them up. He judged them from his own marvellous physique; but the absence of all native followers was also a terrible mistake, if it was not a warning. Anyhow, the fact remained. There were no followers to do the drudgery work inevitable both in camp and on the march.

An artillery officer named Martyn joined, because Park thought it well to have someone who would enforce discipline.

The party left Gorée on the 6th April and reached Kayi, on the Gambia, a few days later. Kayi was a small town a little below Pisanía, and here also he could get no coolies, but he engaged "a Mandingo priest," named Isaaco, who had travelled as a merchant in the interior and was to act as guide.

The caravan started on the 27th April under a salute from the *Crescent* and the other ships in the river. There were forty-four white men, thirty-five of them soldiers, and there were forty-four baggage asses which had been bought at St. Jago, and even these were overloaded.

It was very different from the start in 1795 when Park had only the negro Johnson, Demba, an up-country youth, a cob for himself, a donkey for his baggage and a donkey for each of his servants; but he started then in the beginning of December. Now, close on May, the heat was terrible. The donkeys that did not throw their loads, lay down. The men were not much better. They broke up into groups, and threw themselves down exhausted. Before long half of them trailed off on one road after Lieut. Martyn and the rest under Park himself. When they did reunite at the half-way camp, all were utterly worn out and fit for nothing in the way of camp-work. It is

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significant that later Park was to record the delirium and death of one of the men, who had been thirty-six years a soldier, twelve times a corporal, nine times sergeant, but always returned to the ranks. Roger McMillan lasted till the 2nd July, and there were many who died before that.

A halt was made at Pisanía, and eight more donkeys were bought. An attempt at system was made in breaking up the column into groups, six of them each with its complement of transport animals and stores, marked so that they could be picked out at the end of the march, and a definite start was made on the 4th May. As far as records go, Park arranged all this himself. Martyn then and throughout seldom did anything, not even in keeping the escort from straggling.

In spite of the additional transport there was the same trouble, and it was the 11th May before they reached Medina, the capital of Woollí. By this time two of the soldiers were down with dysentery, and within the week another died of epilepsy.

As if these troubles were not enough, a swarm of bees attacked the caravan. Seven of the donkeys died or were lost, and a fire, probably started to drive off the bees, came near to burning the whole of the baggage. On the 12th June there was a violent rain-storm, and in a very short time the ground was covered to a depth of three inches. Twelve men were laid up next day, and on the 17th almost all were ill and some were delirious. On the 6th July all the party "except one" were either actually sick or were utterly worn out.

In addition to the climate they were followed by a regular swarm of robbers, attracted by the news of a wealthy caravan, and they got to the notorious centre of



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them at Keminum, on the Bali river. Keminum was the most strongly fortified place which Park had seen in Africa, and it was very necessary, for the sons of the *Mansa* "were reckoned the greatest thieves and blackguards on the whole route," and there seem to have been thirty of them. *Mansa* Numma himself was a bloodthirsty old ruffian, "and always inflicted capital punishment himself." Park saw more than thirty skulls down by the riverside. The "princes" made several open attempts at robbery, and one of them actually snatched a musket from Park's hands. There were two together, and while one distracted his attention by asking for snuff, which Mungo had not got, the other seized the gun from behind. Park drew his sword and ran after him, and Anderson, who had a chance of shooting, unfortunately did not, because he recognized the thief as one of the *Mansa's* sons, and the man escaped among the rocks. The other prince meanwhile stole Park's great-coat from his saddle.

When remonstrance was made to another prince, he said it would be quite justifiable to shoot anyone who made attempts of the kind. Just before this Isaaco had most unfortunately been attacked by a crocodile in the Wonda river, which seized him by one leg, and when the Mandingo priest drove his finger into one of its eyes, seized upon the other leg and was served in the same way. Isaaco's wounds were serious enough, but were only on the surface, and Park sewed them up, and Isaaco, after the manner of wild animals, was soon as well as ever again, but it delayed the caravans near Keminum.

When they left Keminum, "the townspeople gathered round us in crowds. They had stolen during our

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stay here four great-coats, a large bundle of beads, a musket, a pair of pistols, and several other things," and there were more defiant robberies in a rocky pass, where many of the donkeys threw their loads. Park notes despondently that they were "experienced thieves." Much the same happened at and near the "walled village of Nummaboo."

During all this time men of the escort were dying nearly every day, some of fever, some undoubtedly killed by the natives, others torn to pieces by the wolves as they lay exhausted in the jungle. The transport animals fared just as badly. On the 30th July Park notes: "On the road we passed the last of the St. Jago asses, the whole forty having either died or been abandoned on the road at different places." He bought more animals every now and again, but does not ever seem to have been able to get men to drive them, for there is a casual reference that on one particular march he "drove thirteen asses," as if this was more than usual. Indeed, Park did everything, searched for stragglers, encouraged the faint-hearted, doctored the sick, and yet found time to take regular astronomical observations and to make notes on the gold-washing methods of the people and the richness of the deposits. Scott and Anderson very soon were too ill to do anything, and Park had to lend his horse to one or other of them. The only reference to Martyn is when he also occasionally fell ill. He never seems even to have helped to mount the guard at night and left that to the leader of the expedition, who sometimes actually dug graves for those who died in camp, certainly fewer than those whose end was never heard of.

The march became more and more tragic. Ander-

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son became so ill that he had to be carried on an improvised litter. Scott was mounted on Anderson's horse, but had soon to go back to Kumi Kumi, where he died. He never saw the Niger. At the crossing of the Ba Wulima, Park, with only one man to help him, crossed the river waist-deep sixteen times. With any less pertinacious leader the party would never have got farther ; but on the 19th August he reached the crest of the Senegal-Niger watershed, and the sight of the great river gave him enough doggedness to carry on, though he, Anderson, and everybody else had to pass the night without tents and without food.

They reached Bamako down a steep slope, by half-past six at night. Of thirty-four soldiers and four carpenters who left Pisania on the 4th May, only six soldiers and one carpenter reached the Niger. The French railway from Dakar takes one to Bamako now in fewer days than it took Park months, and a French Colonial Secretary goes on from there to Lake Chad and, in a motor-car, crosses the Sahara to Algiers.

Fortunately boats could be hired at Bamako, and, while Martyn and the transport marched down the river bank, Park and his few survivors dropped down to Marrabu on a five-knot current.

Isaaco had by this time recovered from his crocodile bites, and he was sent on to Sego to ask permission from Mansong, the Bambarra King, for leave to pass through his territory. He was kept waiting for a good many days, but this was the less serious because Park had an acute attack of dysentery and dosed himself so drastically with calomel that he could neither speak nor sleep for six days.

Park had sent quite a handsome present to Mansong — a silver-plated turcen, two double-barrelled guns,

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two silver-mounted pistols, thirty-two yards of scarlet broadcloth, besides other things—and this proved successful.

There is a suggestion that Mansong had some superstitious objection to meeting a white man, but he did give permission to pass down the river, and even promised protection to the border of his territory, which reached to Timbuktu ; he also said Park might build a boat wherever he chose to do it.

During this halt two more soldiers died, so that there were only five men left besides Anderson and Martyn; but at last on the 12th September they got away. Unfortunately the canoes were not roofed over and the heat was terrific, so that Park got another bout of fever. He would have been wise to march down the river bank with Martyn and the transport animals.

On the second day they arrived at Sansanding, and his former host, Kunti Mamadi, gave him a couple of huts. Although this was a town of twelve thousand people, hyænas howled all night and wolves prowled round it, and the dead body of a soldier named Garland was carried off. As a contrast the large market-place was crowded from morning to night, and there was a great display of goods. There were stalls heaped with the gaudy beads that appeal to all savage women ; there were piles of small bits of antimony for the more sophisticated, who wanted to show up their eyes ; there were rings and bangles of copper and silver ; and there were silks that had come across the Sahara to Timbuktu and then up the river. One whole corner was devoted to the salt market, where the slabs brought from the Great Desert fetched eight thousand cowries, over half the price of a cow and a fifth of what a "prime slave" was labelled at. There was also much indigo

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the interior reported disaster. Park's supposed approval of the slave trade was forgotten, and nothing was remembered but his zeal and his courage. Yet it was not till 1810 that Government took active measures to find out the truth. Isaaco was sent off from Senegal and reached Sansanding in October and found Amadi Fatuma there. Both he and Isaaco submitted journals (in Arabic) and left no doubt about the fate of the party.

Amadi was not with Park at the end, but he had gone with him as far as Yauri in the Haussa country, where, he said, his agreement ended. He had scarcely left Park, when he himself was seized and "kept in irons" for three months, by whom he does not make clear. His account of the actual catastrophe was got from a slave, the only one of the party who escaped, and it was probably largely fanciful, but the lamentable fact was notorious. Amadi in his report gives an account of the thousand miles down the Niger that Park had covered from Sansanding, but he is more concerned with minor details than with anything directly about Park. There were, he says, constant brushes with war canoes from the second day on, notably in the stretch of river before Timbuktu was reached. Here there were very many islands, and lower down reefs, rapids and rocks, some of them all but submerged. At Kabara, "the port of Timbuktu," only three war canoes tried to bar their way; but farther down, in the country of the Tuaregs, where the river turns south, there were, he says, sixty of them. All the attacks were beaten off, for Amadi maintains each of the party had fifteen muskets. This we need not believe, though we are told the *Joliba* killed so many that Amadi thought it necessary to tell Martyn that it was

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time to stop. Martyn, in this last lap of the journey, seems to have proved that he was a fighting man actually as well as professionally, and wanted to serve Amadi himself as he served the attackers, but was restrained by Park. That we can quite believe.

- When the French naval officer Hourst passed down the river a century later, bands of Tuaregs galloped along the bank, though they did not venture to attack. It seems most likely that the "army" which Amadi tells of was some such gathering, smarting under the losses which they had suffered.

The river below Yauri certainly narrows, but there is no such gorge as the Kasson man talks of at Bussa. There are three channels, one of them a very difficult one, and it was no doubt in this that the *Joliba* was when the attack was made with "lances, pikes, arrows and stones." These, we may take it, killed those on board. At any rate, the story that Park and Martyn each seized one of the two remaining soldiers, jumped into the river and were drowned with them, does not sound very probable.

It is not clear who the attackers were. Sir Richard Burton, who is consistently ungenerous to Park, says they were Haussa tribesmen who had not been paid for supplies. That is utterly unlike Park, if he knew of it. It is much more likely that they were Tuaregs, but Sir Richard would never admit that Musalmans were not superior to all other races whatsoever. When Clapperton, with his servant Richard Lander (afterwards to become explorer himself), passed Bussa twenty years later, he met people on the island in mid-river who remembered the disaster and pointed out the place where the *Joliba* and Park had been lost. They

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assured him that the explorer had been attacked in mistake for somebody else.

It was a most deplorable and bitter end. The *Joliba* had covered over a thousand miles from Sandanding and had actually passed all the most dangerous rocks and rapids.

Hourst, who made the journey exactly a hundred years later, starting from Kulikoro, just below Sandanding, gives a lively account of these dangers to navigation in language which is so picturesque as to be almost theatrical. Amadi ignores the rocks, but is emphatic about aggressive hippopotami. Park sailed in a boat with sides—they can hardly be called timbers—so weather-worn that they had to be patched where they were not too rotten. Hourst went down in two *cannonnières*, which were really flats, built of aluminium, thirteen metres long, two and a half metres broad, drawing no more than forty centimetres, with Lebel rifles and a Hotchkiss gun for armament.

It is lamentable to think that when Park reached Bussa the passage ahead of him was much more easy. It is fair to say that Lieut. Hourst writes with admiration of Park, though he is at no pains to hide his dislike of the English, both men and women.

Hourst started from the navigable head of the Niger, with the knowledge, derived from Lander and his successors, that it ran into the Atlantic. Park, so far as we know, up to the last was confident that the river did not lose itself in Central Africa; but he was more than half persuaded that the mouth of the Congo was the mouth of the Niger. All his papers on this water-journey were lost. He was tireless in collecting information, not only about the products and trade

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of the country he passed through, but about all the lands round about, so he may have known the truth.

If so, it added to the bitterness of death. Between him and the Bay of Benin there was a hopeless welter of perpetually warring tribes, part mere slave raiders, part given to human sacrifice, and part plain cannibals. He might have got through. He certainly had all the courage and determination that it required. Richard Lander did it a quarter of a century later; got two canoes at Yauri, above Bussa, sailed down the main channel, through the foetid swamps of the delta, past the equally foetid murderous tribesmen, and on the 24th November, 1830, entered the Bay of Benin and solved the age-old problem, and proved that McQueen, a West Indies planter, and a German in the *Ephimerides Geographiques*, neither of whom had ever been in Africa, were right, though neither Government nor the African Association believed them. Airplanes flying to Kumassi and beyond from the Accra aerodrome can see it all nowadays.

A tablet on the ruined walls of Foulshiels records Mungo Park's birthplace, and another in Peebles marks the site of his surgery. It is a few doors east of the Chambers Institute, and a statue has been erected opposite the house in Selkirk where he and Anderson spent much of their youth.

The two years while he was at home were embittered by fierce attacks on him as a supporter of the slave trade, but all who knew him personally unite in saying that he heartily detested the traffic and pitied its victims. He certainly bought slaves, but that was because it was the only way of getting labour.



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All Park's supposed Anti-Abolition leanings were soon forgotten, and nothing was remembered but his courage, his patience and his unwavering determination and the marvellous constitution which enabled him to endure exposure, privations, all but starvation, without a murmur.